

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 CPR-01 SY-05 PER-01 SSC-01 DHA-05 EB-08
CA-01 SCS-03 /086 W
-----130678 260432Z /17

R 251955Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5843
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PDIP
SUBJ: CALL ON PRESIDENT

1. I CALLED ON PRESIDENT ROMERO MONDAY (24 OCT) TO DELIVER AN AUTOGRAPHED FRAMED PICTURE AND A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER.
2. I ASKED WHETHER HE HAD A RESPONSE YET TO ASST SECRETARY TODMAN'S LETTER INVITING HIM TO BE BANQUET SPEAKER ON FEBRUARY 16, 1978 AT THE THIRD ANNUAL CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS. HE SAID HE ACCEPTED WITH HONOR AND WOULD RESPOND IN WRITING THIS WEEK. THE DELAY WAS CAUSED IN PART BY NECESSITY TO HAVE THE INCOMING LETTER TRANSLATED.
3. WE DISCUSSED THE ARRIVAL WEDNESDAY PM (OCT 26) OF AMBASSADOR DEVINE. HE SAID THAT APPROPRIATE AND DISCREET SECURITY PRECAUTIONS WOULD BE TAKEN AS I HAD DISCUSSED WITH THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL. I HAD SUGGESTED THE GOES TAKE WHATEVER

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MEASURES THEY THOUGHT NECESSARY OR ADVISABLE, OFFERING OUR SECURITY OFFICER SERVICES FOR COORDINATION WITH EMBASSY. I THANKED HIM AND ASKED HIM TO LET US KNOW IF THERE WERE INTELLIGENCE INDICATING ANY SORT OF THREAT AGAINST THE AMBASSADOR AT HIS ARRIVAL OR AFTER. HE SAID HE WOULD BUT HE KNEW OF NONE.

4. THE PRESIDENT AT FIRST EXPRESSED DOUBT OVER HAVING AMBASSADOR DEVINE MEET PRESS AT AIRPORT BEFORE CREDENTIALS WERE PRESENTED BUT THEN AGREED THERE WAS NO WAY TO KEEP AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL SECRET AND NOT ADVISABLE IN EFFECT TO SNUB PRESS BY NOT LETTING THEM KNOW AT LEAST FOR NEXT MORNING'S EDITIONS. I ASSURED HIM AMBASSADOR DEVINE HAD NO INTENTION TO GET INTO SUBSTANCE AT THE AIRPORT, BUT WE WOULD IN ANY EVENT BE GUIDED BY HIS WISHES. HE SAID TO AHEAD.

5. PRESIDENT SAID HE WOULD PROBABLY PLAN PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS THE FOLLOWING MONDAY BUT MIGHT DO IT FRIDAY (PROTOCOL OFFICER CONFIRMED AFTERWARDS PRESENTATION SCHEDULED FOR 11:30 AM, MONDAY, 31 OCT 77).

6. PRESIDENT ASKED ME TO RECEIVE A CATHOLIC PRIEST (JOSE CRISTOBAL CORTES RAMIREZ) WHO WANTED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY TO GO TO A CHURCH IN US BECAUSE HE COULD NO LONGER TOLERATE LINE BEING TAKEN BY THE CHURCH IN EL SALVADOR UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ARCHBISHOP. I AGREED TO RECEIVE HIM. PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED EMBASSY SHOULD HEAR HIS STORY OF WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON IN THE CHURCH. I SAID WE WERE AWARE OF DIFFERING POINTS OF VIEW WITHIN THE CHURCH.

7. I MENTIONED THAT THE BASIC SOLUTION TO EL SALVADOR'S PROBLEMS PROBABLY STILL LAY IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE PRESIDENT THEN TOLD OF A RECENT MEETING HE HAD WITH REPRESENTATIVE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SENTATIVES OF WEALTHY IN THE COMMUNITY. THEY HAD COME TO ASK WHERE THE "STRONG MAN" WAS WHO WAS ELECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY OF EL SALVADOR. HE REPLIED QTE IF BY STRONG MAN YOU MEAN SOMEONE WHO WILL SWEEP THE COUNTRYSIDE CLEAN AND CONDUCT A MASS KILLING OF SALVADORANS JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE FRIGHTENED, I AM NOT THAT MAN UNQTE. THEN HE SAID HE ACCUSED THEM OF BEING GREATLY AT FAULT THEMSELVES FOR THE PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY. QTE WHERE ARE THE COFFEE PROFITS? UNQTE HE ASKED POINTING HIS FINGER NORTHWARD. QTE YOU DO NOT EVEN PAY THE MINIMUM WAGE FOR YOUR MISERABLE WORKERS UNQTE. QTE YOU NOT ONLY MAINTAIN ONE LUXURIOUS HOUSEHOLD BUT TWO OR THREE, SEND YOUR MISTRESSES UP TO THE STATES TO AWAIT YOU THERE ON YOUR BUSINESS TRIPS AND LOSE THOUSANDS OF COLONES A NIGHT IN THE CASINOS, WHILE YOUR WORKERS SUFFER UNQTE. HE SAID QTE YOU WILL SOON HAVE MY AGRARIAN REFORM AND WE WILL ACQUIRE LAND NOT ONLY IN ZONE 1 (REFERRING TO LAST YEAR'S ABORTIVE PLAN) BUT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. WE WILL FINANCE ITS SALE TO CAMPESINO COOPERATIVES AND NOT CUT IT UP INTO MINIFUNDIA UNQTE. HE ADDED, QTE AND IF THE WEALTHY LANDOWNERS DO NOT PRODUCE ON THEIR LAND THEY WILL BE TAXED UNTIL THEY ARE FORCED TO SELL UNQTE. THE PRESIDENT DESCRIBED THEIR REACTION TO HIS REMARKS AS QTE SHOCK UNQTE. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PROBABLY RIGHT, THE RESULT WILL BE STRONGER OPPOSITION

FROM THEM AND THAT ELEMENT OF SOCIETY.

8. I ASKED ABOUT OTHER ASPECTS OF HIS GOVERNMENT PROGRAM.
HE SAID HIS FIVE-POINT PLAN WOULD BE OUT NEXT MONTH,
CERTAINLY BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

9. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT, AT HIS URGING FOR DIALOGUE,
I HAD STARTED ON A PROGRAM FOR BRIEFINGS BY SECURITY AND
OTHER AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR EMBASSY PERSONNEL. I
EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR A TWO-HOUR SESSION LED BY
COL ALVARENGA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL GUARD (ON
OCTOBER 19 FOR CHARGE, POLITICAL OFFICER, DEFENSE ATTACHE AND
CONSULAR OFFICER). THE PRESIDENT HAD RECEIVED A REPORT FROM
COL ALVANRENGA WHO TOLD HIM HE HAD GIVEN A DETAILED BRIEFING
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AND RESPONDED VERY FRANKLY TO ALL THE EMBASSY QUESTIONS. THE
PRESIDENT URGED THE BRIEFINGS CONTINUE.

10. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT I HAD SPOKEN TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER
ABOUT TWO AMERICAN CITIZEN CASES (HAL DOUGLAS YOUNG AND
RICARDO ARRIETA SALAZAR) AND HAD ORALLY ASKED HIM FOR ALL
INFORMATION THE GOES COULD PROVIDE ON THEM (SEE EMBTELS 4827
AND 4868). HE RECALLED HEARING OF THE ARRIETA CASE AND THAT
ARRIETA HAD SPENT A NUMBER OF YEARS IN CUBA BEFORE
REPORTEDLY COMING BACK TO EL SALVADOR. THE
PRESIDENT INDICATED HE COULD IMAGINE THE REASON* I TOLD HIM
REPORTS REACHING WASHINGTON TOLD OF ARBITRARY DETENTION AND TORTURE
IN EL SALVADOR. I ASKED HIM FOR HIS SUPPORT ON GETTING THE FACTS
ON BOTH CASES, AND WITH REGARD TO ARRIETA WHETHER HE WAS STILL
DETAINED, AND IF SO WHETHER THERE WERE CHARGES AGAINST HIM IN
COURT OR WHETHER THERE WOULD BE A BASIS FOR PREFERRING CHARGES.
HE EXPRESSED AGREEMENT THAT THE FACTS SHOULD BE DETERMINED.

11. I EXPRESSED MY APPRECIATION TO PRESIDENT ROMERO FOR HIS
ATTENTION AND THAT OF HIS MINISTERS GIVEN ME DURING MY UNEXPECTEDLY
LONG, ALMOST FIVE MONTHS AS CHARGE. I WOULD NOW EXERT MY
EFFORTS I SAID TO ASSISTING AMBASSADOR DEVINE AND TO WORKING
WITH HIM IN A TEAM DEDICATED TO CONTINUING EFFORTS TOWARD
MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN EL SALVADOR AND THE US.

12. EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC DECONTROL AUTHORIZED BY EH LUBENSKY.
LUBENSKY
Y

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 802707
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CALL ON PRESIDENT
TAGS: PGOV, PDIP, ES, US, (CARTER, JIMMY), (ROMERO MENA, CARLOS HUMBERTO)
To: STATE GUATEMALA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a717a827-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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